

MINUTES – West Tisbury Housing Bank Committee

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:35 PM

Present: Michael Bellissimo (chair), Matt Merry, Sam Hall, Doug Finn (clerk).

Also: Doug Ruskin

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ruskin: Spoke briefly about his recent efforts to revive the island-wide housing bank proposal; He noted that a single meeting had been held, with about fifteen participants. The goals had been to define the group, improve participants, and develop a steering committee. A major goal had been to define a funding model that could work. Another meeting is happening on Saturday morning at 9:30 or 10 AM. Participation by all island select boards is anticipated.

Mr. Finn briefly outlined the work of the WTHB to date, and the general direction and intent.

Mr. Ruskin noted that every town already had a municipal housing trust, and that the individual towns intent – and work to date – can hopefully be incorporated.

Matt Merry: when the land bank was created, it was legislation that was adopted by the towns, and then voted by the state. Is that the intent?

Ruskin: Possibly, but that's not determined yet. There are six municipalities – including Boston – working on municipal housing bank proposals at the state level.

Mr. Bellissimo noted that the committee had done quite a bit of work, and hoped to have its final report before Town Meeting in April or May. Bellissimo noted that Mr. Ruskin was thanked for his time.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. It was MOVED by Finn, SECONDED by Merry

To approve the minutes as presented.

VOTED: 4, 0, 0.

PROPOSED WARRANT ARTICLE

Mr. Hall noted his concern with the island-wide effort to revive the original housing bank proposal, and expressed concern that it might distract from the work that the WTHB committee has done.

Mr. Bellissimo encouraged the committee to stay the course, and proceed with presenting the warrant article to the Selectboard in January, and to Town Meeting in the Spring.

Mr. Merry: We have two years of work, and can make our recommendations, and perhaps dovetail into a regional entity later on down the line – but we should stay the course.

Workshop / Review of Warrant Article

The committee proceeded to conduct extensive review of the proposed warrant article. (The edited version is attached to these minutes as Exhibit A).

The committee recognized that some portions of the language may attempt to grant authority to the Housing Board that may not be permissible under state law. Mr. Finn suggested (and the committee agreed) to send the language to the Town Accountant for review and advice.

After extensive discussion, the committee agreed to review the revised language and, if absolutely necessary, to meet immediately before the Selectboard meeting on January 6, 2021.

ADJOURN

It was MOVED by Finn, SECONDED by Hall

To Adjourn

VOTED 4, 0, 0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 PM.

Respectfully, Douglas Finn, clerk.

APPROVED, 1/07/21.